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New York

Chairman: Mr. Mernier ..... (Belgium)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 63 to 79 *(continued)*

General debate on all disarmament and international security items

Mr. Erwa (Sudan) (*interpretation from Arabic*): It is a pleasure for me to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, as well as the other members of the Bureau, on your election to lead the First Committee this year. I wish to express the Sudan's confidence that you will guide the work of our Committee to the results we hope to achieve.

I wish to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to your predecessor, Mr. Nkgowe of Botswana, for his work as Chairman and his wise guidance of the work of our Committee during the fifty-second session.

The Sudan, while welcoming the international developments and initiatives aimed at eliminating nuclear weapons, still feels that there remains a great deal in the area of nuclear disarmament that the international community must do. I wish here to mention the need to seriously negotiate nuclear disarmament in a comprehensive manner, in accordance with the provisions of the General Assembly's 1978 special session devoted to disarmament. The General Assembly's next special session on disarmament should allow the international community to review which of these provisions have been implemented and to present further recommendations in order to confront current challenges.

We attach great importance to the meetings that will be held as part of the year 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in order to implement the provisions of the Treaty and to meet the commitments entered into during the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty.

The Sudan participates in and supports all international and regional efforts aimed at imposing an embargo on anti-personnel landmines. In Ottawa last year we were one of the first States to sign the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. The fact that the Sudan has signed this Convention shows our strong conviction that peace and security must prevail, our feelings of international responsibility and our recognition of the human, social and economic tragedies caused by the use of landmines.

The Sudan is one of the African countries that suffers most from the dangers of landmines, which pose a serious threat to human beings as well as to the environment and natural resources. Landmines also prevent assistance from reaching individuals in need and are preventing more than 2 million displaced persons from returning to their homes.

In this respect, my delegation wishes to mention that, while me much appreciate the proposed programme of the United Nations Demining Unit to deal with landmines in Sudan, this programme still awaits financing. We hope that the donor community will assist us by providing the material and financial aid we need to deal with the landmine problem.

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The Sudan attaches special importance to the need to deal with the conventional weapons problem, especially in Africa, which is suffering from wars and from weapons that are finding their way to rebels. We need to put an end to the trafficking in conventional weapons, which is violating human rights and other basic principles and is destabilizing nations.

However, we feel that we have the right to use conventional weapons to defend our borders and national territory. This has been recognized by international law and in other international instruments.

We feel that the problem does not lie so much in the trafficking in arms itself as in the causes of the conflicts. Initiatives should take into account the specific nature of each region. We therefore appeal to other countries to meet their obligations and stop providing conventional weapons to rebels, allowing them to destabilize countries that wish to live securely and in peace.

The Sudan, like other members of the international community, believes that transparency in the area of weaponry is the primary way to consolidate peace and international security. The Sudan supports the position that the League of Arab States conveyed to the Secretary-General regarding the need for transparency in the weaponry and the current lack of transparency in United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. The Register should be expanded so as to contain data relating to weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, as well as to the military uses of sophisticated technologies.

Moreover, the Register does not take into account the situation in the Middle East, where we find Israel still occupying Arab and Palestinian territories and possessing the most destructive weapons.

In fact, Israel is the only State in the region which is not a party to the NPT and which has not endorsed the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Israel stubbornly rejects the appeals of the international community to accede to the Treaty and to subject its nuclear installations to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. If this situation persists, it could heighten tension in the region.

I draw the attention of delegations to an important event that occurred in my country. On 20 August 1998, the United States destroyed a pharmaceutical factory in Sudan on the pretext that it was producing substances that could be used to manufacture chemical weapons, a claim that was rejected by the entire world. This was a unilateral measure by the United States and had no basis in fact. At its 9th meeting, the First Committee heard the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, who noted that the United States, which possesses the world's largest pharmaceutical companies, is not acting in conformity with article VI of the chemical weapons Convention by refusing to subject its industrial installations to inspection. This is what I would call a double-standard policy, a policy which we have denounced on a number of occasions.

But at a time when a pharmaceutical factory in a developing country is destroyed on a false pretext, we note that the mass media are reporting that Israel is transferring chemicals that are used to manufacture nerve gas. This was reported in *The New York Times* on 2 October 1998. Yet no one has reacted, even to verify these charges, despite the danger of the situation.

I wish in conclusion to reaffirm our determination to work with you, Mr. Chairman, to discuss all items on the agenda of the First Committee and to agree on acceptable draft resolutions.

Mr. Kunda (Zambia): At the outset, Sir, let me congratulate you on your unanimous election as Chairman of the First Committee this year. You bring to your office the great diplomatic skill and energy required to stir the Committee's work to a successful conclusion. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their unanimous election to their respective posts.

By the same token, let me recognize the great and skilful leadership that your predecessor, Mr. Mothusi D.C. Nkgowe of Botswana, brought to this Committee during the fifty-second session of the General Assembly.

The total elimination of nuclear weapons from the face of the Earth is the bedrock of international peace and security. For non-nuclear-weapon States, the urgency of achieving a world without nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is a real and demanding preoccupation. However, we note with regret that this sense of urgency is not fully shared by some nuclear-weapon States. At best, they pay lip service to complete or total nuclear disarmament, and at worst they want the retention of nuclear weapons for all time in the name of nuclear deterrence.

It is thus clear that nuclear weapons are the cornerstone of the foreign policies of nuclear-weapon States

for the long haul. This means that, despite the celebrated demise of the most oppressive cold war, the cold-war paradigm is alive and well. In this continuing paradigm, security, anchored in nuclear weapons, is the continuing touchstone of national security considerations for the nuclear Powers. This phenomenon tends to belie the proclamations of nuclear-weapon States about their commitment to general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. Indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is being translated into the indefinite retention of nuclear weapons. This is clearly borne out by the failure of the Conference on Disarmament to agree on the establishment of an ad hoc committee to negotiate nuclear disarmament.

In this regard, we are concerned by the reluctance of some nuclear Powers to negotiate nuclear disarmament in the multilateral setting of the Conference on Disarmament and by their opting instead for bilateral negotiations away from the global scrutiny that would be proper for a global issue. We totally disagree with this approach. It does not foster transparency; nor does it constitute a confidence-building measure.

We believe that nuclear weapons, as weapons of mass destruction, threaten all the peoples of the world. Once unleashed by choice, accident, miscalculation or sheer malfunction, they will not distinguish between combatant and non-combatant, friend or foe. Everyone and everything will fall victim to total annihilation by nuclear weapons. The international community, through the broad-based membership of the Conference on Disarmament, must therefore be involved in negotiations on a convention to ban nuclear weapons.

It is also our belief that, just as the whole host of other international instruments, such as the NPT, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, were negotiated in the Conference on Disarmament as the single and sole negotiating body on disarmament-related issues, nuclear disarmament should likewise be negotiated in that body. It cannot be an exception to the rule.

Adherence to the sterile doctrines of the cold war has also been manifested in the rejection by some nuclear-weapon States of a 1996 time-bound disarmament framework proposed by the Group of 21 in the Conference on Disarmament as a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons. That proposal represents a realistic approach which could serve as a useful guideline for future negotiations on the all-important, critical issue of nuclear disarmament. It was even made crystal clear that this proposal was flexible, meaning that nuclear-weapon States would introduce variations in it. It was not a programme to be imposed on nuclear-weapon States. Most important, it was not meant to be a straitjacket within which the programme of nuclear disarmament was to be carried out.

Happily, we have another attempt, announced on 9 June 1998 by the Group of Eight, whose delegations have already spoken about their initiative, entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda". Zambia supports this initiative designed to seek ways and means to rekindle the will of the international community for nuclear disarmament. To this end, my delegation will support the draft resolution which will be submitted in this Committee to define the new disarmament agenda in the unending quest to eradicate nuclear weapons for all time.

In our relentless search for total nuclear disarmament through a convention to ban nuclear weapons, we feel vindicated indeed by the historic advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice handed down on 8 July 1996 at The Hague, on the legality of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We all know very well that the Court in its opinion said that:

> "There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control". (*A/51/218, annex, para. 105*)

This unanimous determination by the International Court of Justice was a landmark Advisory Opinion constituting a new frame of reference for all of the efforts of the international community in favour of nuclear disarmament. Although not binding, this high Advisory Opinion has been helpful in consolidating international public opinion. We urge nuclear-weapon States not to lose sight of that International Court of Justice landmark Advisory Opinion but to draw from it inspiration to negotiate nuclear disarmament in good faith.

The indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1995 and the conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1996 meant that major hurdles had been overcome on the road to further and consolidated non-

proliferation and eventually nuclear disarmament. There was therefore much talk about the next steps to be undertaken to maintain the momentum generated by the indefinite extension of the NPT and the conclusion of the CTBT.

The conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) was, among others, seen as a natural course of action to maintain that momentum. It was this realization that informed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 48/75 L by consensus. That consensus resolution urged that negotiations go forward in the Conference on Disarmament on the fissile material cut-off treaty.

Zambia is happy that finally, after five years, agreement was reached in the Conference on Disarmament on 11 August 1998 to establish a new ad hoc committee on the fissile material cut-off treaty. We therefore expect this matter to be among the top priorities of the agenda of the Conference in January 1999. In this regard, might I say that my delegation is well aware that the treaty is going to be a very controversial subject. However, Zambia believes that for the FMCT to be meaningful, it should include all the fissile materials used to produce nuclear weapons, including those in existing stockpiles, in order to foster confidence and transparency. Failure to include existing stockpiles of weapons-grade fissile materials would create yet another loophole similar to that from which the CTBT suffers as a result of testing through technical means or computer simulation having been left out — a grave mistake of omission, not commission, at the time of the creation of the CTBT regime.

Another issue ripe for negotiations to build upon the NPT and the CTBT is that of security guarantees by nuclear-weapon States to assure non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, which would take the form of an international, legally binding instrument. Nuclear-weapon States undertook to negotiate security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, but to date no such guarantees have been negotiated simply because of the lack of commitment, if not total disregard, on the part of some nuclear-weapon States to address this important issue on the international security agenda.

By foregoing the possession of nuclear weapons, non-nuclear- weapon States have made a huge and unparalleled contribution to international peace and security. They therefore deserve to be under the umbrella of an international arrangement assuring NPT non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. This must be enshrined in a legally binding instrument on negative security guarantees, negotiated multilaterally in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament. To this end, my delegation urges the Conference on Disarmament to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee in early 1999 to negotiate an international instrument on negative security guarantees for non-nuclear-weapon States by nuclear-weapon States.

When the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was adopted on 10 September 1996 by the resumed session of the fiftieth General Assembly, Zambia welcomed it as a historic achievement but decried the fact that it was not as comprehensive as it was meant to be. This concern, or might I say fear, was expressed not only by Zambia but by many non-aligned countries at the creation of the CTBT as the touchstone of the nuclear test ban. This fear is now being realized. My delegation is naturally perturbed by the fact that nuclear-weapon tests by alternative, high-technology means such as subcritical experiments, fusion research and superconductor simulations are being carried out by some nuclear-weapon States. This is obviously breaching the spirit of the CTBT.

All it takes is for one country to conduct a simulated nuclear-weapon test, and all other nuclear-weapon States will follow. This has become the rule of law among nuclear-weapon States. This is an ominous development, because we no longer have only five nuclear-weapon Powers. A reality check informs us that we have five plus two nuclear-weapon Powers, following the nuclear-weapon test explosions conducted by India and Pakistan last May. For all intents and purposes, South Asia is now a theatre of nuclear-weapon confrontation, and therefore yet another threat to international peace and security has come to the fore.

The emergence of South Asia as a nuclear-weapon theatre and the existence of other threshold nuclear-weapon States pose a demanding challenge to the major nuclear Powers, which should seriously strive to provide robust leadership to bring about a nuclear-weapon meltdown, with the eventual aim of banning nuclear weapons for all time.

Zambia has always been an ardent advocate of the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. These zones play a major role in strengthening the fabric of the international regime of nuclear non-proliferation and towards realizing the overall objective of nuclear disarmament. It is a source of contentment that today the Antarctic Treaty, coupled with the treaties of Tlatelolco,

Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba, have had the cumulative effect of freeing the entire Southern Hemisphere from the spectre of nuclear weapons. Surely these nuclear-weapon-free zones must have a demonstration effect and should even add impetus to the process of nuclear disarmament and to the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime.

The five nuclear-weapon-free zones have without a doubt imprinted upon the international public conscience the image of a globe over half of whose surface is already free from the scourge of nuclear weapons. More nuclear-weapon-free zones should be established.

The Middle East region has been yearning to become a nuclear-weapon-free zone for a long time. Such a zone in the Middle East must, like the existing ones, be established on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. In order for the Middle East to become a nuclear-weapon-free zone, Israel must join the Non-Proliferation Treaty and place its nuclear facilities under the International Atomic Energy Agency system of safeguards.

We also support the countries of Central Asia in their quest to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. By the same token, Zambia supports Mongolia in its quest for a single-country nuclear-weapon-free zone.

Twenty years have passed since the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD I) was held and 10 years since the third session (SSOD III). In the meantime, several momentous changes and events have taken place in the field of nuclear non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament. Members of the Non-Aligned Movement have long, in this Committee and elsewhere, been calling for SSOD IV at each and every session of the General Assembly. My delegation had hoped that the issue of convening SSOD IV would be resolved during the three years of focused attention given it by the Commission on Disarmament. This year was the third and final year of consideration by the Disarmament Commission of this important subject, but no agreement was reached on the holding of SSOD IV.

The time is now overdue for the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament in order to review and assess thoroughly the implementation of the provisions of the Final Document of SSOD I, held in 1978. The continuing frustration at the issue of the convening of SSOD IV by some nuclear-weapon States belies their commitment to total nuclear disarmament, as set out in the programme embodied in the 1978 Final Document.

We urge all nuclear Powers to seize leadership in pursuing vigorously the implementation of General Assembly resolution 52/38 F, adopted by consensus, on the imperative need to convene the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament to map out a strategy for nuclear disarmament. Failure to map out a strategy on disarmament will mean that the twenty-first century will inherit all the problems of the twentieth century in the field of nuclear disarmament and will have to deal with an expanded club of nuclear-weapon States.

Under general and complete disarmament, the concern for conventional weapons remains as paramount as ever. Within the framework of conventional weapons, small arms and light weapons have taken conventional warfare to a new and unprecedented level altogether. The irony of small arms and light weapons is that the conflicts and suffering they spawn are neither small nor light. If anything, they are of titanic proportions, taking immeasurably heavy tolls, particularly on civilian populations. They therefore constitute an issue of legitimate concern for the international community.

While several countries in the world have borne the brunt of small arms and light weapons, the continent of Africa has been particularly abused by small arms and light weapons, as is evidenced by the widespread fratricidal wars and violence engendered by the use of small arms and light weapons as weapons of choice.

Zambia is also particularly alarmed and disturbed by the increasing participation of children in current conflicts, in which small arms and light weapons are the primary or sole instruments of conflict. Ten years ago, 200,000 children under the age of 16 were said to have taken part in conflicts in 25 countries. With the proliferation of protracted conflicts, with their increased intensity and severity, entire generations of children have, regrettably, been affected.

Zambia finds it totally unsettling and unacceptable that small arms and light weapons continue to bring death and untold suffering, particularly in vulnerable multi-ethnic societies with a deep-rooted history of tension among groups. There are also countries emerging from long and protracted fratricidal wars and confronted with the monumental task of reintegrating former combatants from uncivil into civil society. The destabilizing consequences of an excessive accumulation, proliferation, transfer and use

of small arms and light weapons deserves urgent global attention. The call for an international conference on small arms and light weapons is therefore a timely international response to that menace.

With regard to anti-personnel landmines, Zambia welcomes the fact that the Convention, which was negotiated in Oslo and opened for signature in Ottawa last December, has had its fortieth ratification thanks to the Government of Burkina Faso, thus paving the way for the Convention's entry into force on 1 March 1999. In this regard, Zambia joins other delegations that have warmly welcomed the invitation of the Government of Mozambique to host the first meeting of the States parties in Maputo in May 1999. This is a reflection of Mozambique's commitment to the problem of eliminating landmines, which decimated that country and its people over many years.

The speed of the ratification process of the Convention on anti-personnel landmines has been remarkable. This is without doubt a manifestation of the strong international resolve to rid the world of the burden of mines and all the humanitarian problems that attend those silent but lethal weapons of choice. It is my delegation's hope that just as the ratification process was accelerated, so will be the international community's efforts to universalize the Convention. This is a challenge for the coalition of Governments, international organizations and institutions, non-governmental organizations and civil society at large that made the Convention possible. More — and harder — work lies ahead in terms of implementing the Convention upon its entry into force. Fortunately, there is a strong coalition, which sponsored the creation of the Convention and which is equal to the challenge of implementing the Convention.

Mr. Koirala (Nepal): Let me join other delegations in extending to you, Mr. Chairman, and to other members of the Bureau, our warm congratulations on your well-deserved election. It is our firm belief that under your able and skilled guidance the Committee's work will be successfully conducted. You can certainly rest assured of my delegation's cooperation in your task.

This year the First Committee is holding its deliberations against the background of some events that have left a deep impact on global disarmament initiatives. Reference can be made to a few of them, such as the imminent entry into force of the anti-personnel landmines treaty and the agreements reached at the Conference on Disarmament leading to the establishment of ad hoc committees to start negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty and on a legally binding instrument of security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States. Such favourable signs in the area of global disarmament notwithstanding, the overall scenario provides a gloomy picture, as evidenced by the lack of political will to agree on a time-bound elimination of nuclear weapons. As the Secretary-General appropriately remarked during his opening statement to the Committee,

> "It would be the height of folly to take it for granted that nuclear weapons are too terrible ever to be used and that States would keep them only as a deterrent." (*A/C.1/53/PV.3, p. 4*)

Nuclear weapons continue to pose a threat to the survival of mankind. The primary disarmament objective should be to rid the world of all nuclear weapons. The recent nuclear tests conducted in our region have reminded us that the international community cannot afford to remain complacent in the field of nuclear disarmament. These occurrences have provided reinforcement to our long-held commitment to accelerating the negotiations aimed at the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. The conclusion of a universal and legally binding nuclear weapons convention, committing all States parties to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, is more urgent than ever.

We welcome the speedy ratifying process of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. The early operationalization of that treaty, however, should give momentum to international efforts for mine clearance. Assisting landmine victims and the development of technology for mine detection should remain a global concern. It also needs to be borne in mind that the Convention is no more than a prescription, the ultimate cure being the application of provisions in the actual field. In my delegation's view, the implementation of the treaty should be accorded priority by all States parties to the Convention.

The agreement reached at the Conference on Disarmament to start negotiations for concluding a fissile material cut-off treaty is a step in the right direction. Such a treaty, however, must take account of the existing stockpiles of weapons-grade fissionable materials. We are concerned that 2,000 metric tons of plutonium and highly enriched uranium in current stockpiles can be enough material for 100,000 nuclear warheads. The treaty's comprehensive aspect will be undermined if this factor is ignored.

Nepal has noted with deep appreciation the recent endeavours of the United Nations to accord priority to disarmament matters. The re-establishment of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, headed by Under-Secretary-General Jayantha Dhanapala underscores this point. Disarmament should remain at the heart of the United Nations efforts to secure and strengthen international peace and security.

The current sporadic conflicts that are killing innocent civilians is attributable to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. In today's context, disarmament is necessary in both large and small arms. The horrific present acts of violence are being committed without recourse to sophisticated weapons. Small arms are increasingly used as a primary means of violence in internal conflicts and account for the greatest percentage of deaths and injuries in many armed conflicts. Because of the security, political and social implications involved in the ill-considered use of small and light weapons, we view with deep concern the rampant illegal trafficking in small arms and light weapons and their availability.

A few noteworthy steps have taken place in the field of curbing such arms flows. The moratorium established by the Economic Community of West African States on the trade and manufacture of small arms and the recent entry into force of the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Illegal Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials are laudable. However, far more concerted efforts are required to stem the proliferation of small arms.

For achieving the goals of complete and general disarmament, the usefulness of creating universal awareness of the need for disarmament can never be underestimated. It is against this backdrop that the United Nations has been devoting resources to promote a world disarmament campaign. In this connection, mention may be made of the role of the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament. As the host of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, my delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Regional Centre. In his main report on the work of the Organization, the Secretary-General has pointed out the essential informational function of diplomacy that the Kathmandu Centre is carrying out by providing a valuable forum for meetings on regional security and confidence-building measures. My delegation urges Member States of the Asia-Pacific region to make greater use of the services of the Centre.

As at the fifty-second session of the General Assembly, my delegation, in consultation with other delegations, intends to submit a draft resolution on the Kathmandu Centre in this Committee at an appropriate time. I sincerely believe that this will enjoy the sponsorship and support of a large number of countries from both within and outside the region.

With the growing universality of a number of disarmament treaties that delegitimize the use of weapons of mass destruction such as chemical and biological weapons and anti-personnel landmines, there is no reason why the same cannot happen as regards nuclear weapons. What is needed is the strong political will of the international community to fulfil the treaty obligations to pursue negotiations in good faith for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons from the world.

Mr. Abou-Hadid (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from French*): It is a great pleasure for our delegation to see you, Mr. Chairman, presiding over our work. Your election is a testimony to your professional qualities and to your experience in the field of disarmament. Our congratulations go also to the other members of the Bureau.

(spoke in English)

My delegation is also greatly pleased to see Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala following our deliberations in person and to see all of the departmental and other Secretariat staff. They all deserve our sincere thanks.

(spoke in Arabic)

The First Committee is meeting amid increasing calls for the achievement of the comprehensive and complete elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons. Allow me here to quote the statement made by my Minister for Foreign Affairs to the General Assembly:

> "Following the end of the cold war a decade ago, many, especially in the countries of the North, believed that this planet, which is home to approximately 6 billion people, was going to become a more stable, secure and prosperous world." *(A/53/PV.19, p. 10)*

Regrettably, these dreams have not come true. As my Minister for Foreign Affairs also said:

"Nuclear weapons, which are unparalleled in their destructive capability, have proliferated since the end of the cold war and have now reached India and Pakistan. This proliferation has also gained a sort of legitimacy based on the fact that Israel's possession of nuclear weapons was not spoken of during the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. My country, Syria, Arab countries and most countries in the Non-Aligned Movement appealed to the five nuclear-weapon States during the review and extension conference for this Treaty not to exempt any country from adhering to this Treaty, so that the world will not face a new nuclear-arms race. Unfortunately that urgent call fell on deaf ears. Those who now assume that nuclear-arms proliferation will be limited to a few countries are mistaken. Syria and all Arab countries call for turning the Middle East into a nuclear-weapon-free zone, as a serious contribution to halting the nuclear-arms race." *(ibid., pp. 10-11)*

The recent series of test explosions in South Asia have created a new reality that must be dealt with, and an appropriate solution must be found by the international community. These tests have made it abundantly clear that the legal framework of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is incapable of providing the necessary and comprehensive guarantees for a world nuclear non-proliferation regime. The international community must deal with these loopholes — renouncing selectivity and double standards and upholding the universality of the Treaty — so as to arrive at a general and complete disarmament.

The recent events have been a cause of concern for us and for the whole world. In this regard, we must ask what their underlying causes are. For many decades India and Pakistan, and, indeed, the international community as a whole, have been calling upon the members of the nuclear club to work for the elimination of nuclear weapons, in accordance with their legal obligations under article VI of the NPT. But, as we said before, these calls fell on deaf ears.

This has led to a nuclear arms race which we believe will continue to escalate owing to the continued nuclear monopoly held by certain States and to the provision of nuclear capabilities for military purposes to some non-nuclear-weapon States on a variety of pretexts. At the same time, nuclear technology for peaceful purposes is denied to countries that need it to foster their development.

Those are the facts. We cannot follow the example of the ostrich and bury our heads in the sand.

This year's debate on disarmament and international security items is taking place against the backdrop of a number of developments in arms control and nuclear disarmament. These include the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the establishment of a number of nuclear-weapon-free zones and the affirmation by some States of their wish to establish such zones in various areas of Asia, and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons.

Those developments, while important, must not give rise to excessive optimism that the lethal threat of nuclear weapons hovering over the future of mankind has been reduced, much less eliminated. We believe that the international situation dictates that we make greater efforts and display good will and serious political will to achieve the goal of the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, first and foremost nuclear weapons.

The situation at the end of the twentieth century is cause for deep concern. The production, stockpiling, deployment and testing of nuclear weapons continue unabated. The nuclear warheads in the arsenals of nuclear-weapon States are a continued source of terror for all mankind. The nuclear-weapon States remain uncommitted to the elimination of these weapons, and continue to reject serious negotiations aimed at the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Some Powers continue to pursue policies of the use of force, interference in the internal affairs of other States, hegemony and the use of blockades and economic pressure against the peoples of developing countries.

All these challenges are an unquestionable source of concern for non-aligned countries, especially because they pose a grave threat to international peace and security — indeed, to the very existence of humanity. We believe that if these challenges are not addressed with due seriousness our credibility will be eroded, especially with regard to our determination to save our peoples from the scourge of war and to live in a world free of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, and in a world of peace and security.

In this connection, my country renews its support for the call by the non-aligned countries in the Conference on Disarmament for the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament as a priority step towards

negotiations on a programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework, including the conclusion of an international convention for the elimination of nuclear weapons with the objective of the complete elimination of these weapons within a specified time-frame. Such a convention must also prohibit the development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, threat of use and use of such weapons, and must bring about the destruction of existing stockpiles. All States without exception must accede to such a convention. In that regard, we welcome the establishment of an ad hoc committee in the Conference on Disarmament to begin negotiations on a fissile materials cut-off treaty.

Syria strongly supports the proposal by the Non-Aligned Movement on convening a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament at the earliest possible date. We hope that this will take place before the beginning of the third millennium.

In the context of our efforts to achieve international security, and pending the elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, non-nuclear-weapon States must be given security assurances against the use or threat of use of such weapons. These must be given in a legally binding instrument signed by the nuclear-weapon States. Unfortunately, what we have seen so far is no cause for optimism: the nuclear-weapon States continue to insist that unilateral declarations provide adequate assurances. In our view, they are thus by no means honouring their commitments in this regard. Syria strongly believes that the NPT will continue to fall short of achieving its objectives if all States without exception do not accede to it and demonstrate their commitment to it. Universality is necessary to give the NPT the credibility it needs to be successful and to reach its goals. This is true on both the international and the regional levels.

Here, my country welcomes Brazil's accession to the NPT; our congratulations go to that country. It is our hope that States which have not yet done so will follow the example of Brazil and will unconditionally join this instrument of international legality.

The successful establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is a positive step towards a world free of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons. My country supports and welcomes the existing zones, and supports the establishment of the new zones proposed by a number of States. Regrettably, however, the Middle East, despite its strategic importance, remains far from achieving this objective. This is because the one State in the region that has not yet acceded to the NPT — Israel — continues to refuse to sign the Treaty or to subject its nuclear facilities to international inspection, as all other States of the region have done with a view to joining together to make the Middle East a zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

At the 1989 Paris Conference, Syria launched an initiative, under the auspices of the United Nations, to make the Middle East a zone free from all weapons of mass destruction, whether nuclear, chemical or biological. Israel has not responded to these calls nor to those made by the United Nations, the Security Council, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), or the summit conferences of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Israel's possession of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in our sensitive region will continue to be a source of concern and to pose a real threat not only to the peoples of the region but to international peace and stability.

We reaffirm once again the need for the international community to induce Israel to adhere to the NPT and to place all of its nuclear facilities and activities under the IAEA safeguards regime, in order for the Middle East region to be free from nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, taking into account the fact that Israel's current position on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and all of its justifications are diametrically opposed and clearly contradictory to its professed desire to establish peace in the region.

Genuine peace must be built on good faith and on restoring the rights of peoples, and not on the acquisition of nuclear weapons or the threat of their use, nor through the imposition of a policy of hegemony and military superiority.

Are those who do not acquire weapons required to give assurances to those who possess the largest nuclear arsenals? That makes no sense. All the States of the region save one have acceded to the NPT. That State stubbornly refuses to accede to the Treaty, in flagrant defiance of the will of the international community. It has an arsenal of hundreds of nuclear missiles, and it refuses to allow any inspections or international supervision. This leads us to another question: which is the rogue State? Which is the State that has violated international law and international legality? The danger is exacerbated because this one State, which has been exempted from a commitment to the NPT,

continues to occupy parts of its neighbours' territories, in defiance of internationally binding resolutions. At the same time, it is manufacturing, developing and acquiring various kinds of sophisticated weapons, in particular weapons of mass destruction.

That State launches satellites and is proud of its ability to spy on the States of the region. It then sheds crocodile tears before the world, saying that its security is threatened, and asks for privileges at the expense of the security of its neighbours.

Syria believes that transparency in armaments is one way to promote international peace and security. We reaffirm our support for the Arab States' response to the Secretary-General that the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, in its current form, lacks transparency. It must be expanded to include, first of all, information about weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, and on advanced technology with military applications, as well as detailed data on national military production. The choice of seven types of defensive weapons is unconvincing, discriminatory and confusing. In addition, it does not take into account the situation in the Middle East, which is characterized by a lack of qualitative balance in the field of armaments.

We in Syria are aware of our responsibility with respect to interregional and international peace and security, and we attach great importance to the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace in the region. It is our hope that in the near future this planet will be free from all forms of war and weapons of mass destruction, foremost among which are nuclear weapons, so that its peoples will be able peacefully to coexist and to work together for development, progress and prosperity.

Two days ago we heard a statement by Mr. José Bustani, Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Despite the fact that we welcome his achievements and his attempts to universalize the Treaty in order to serve the cause of disarmament, regrettably we must say that some of the points he made in his statement do not fit with the current reality in the Middle East. He said that the peace process is on track and that the efforts under way will lead to the achievement of a comprehensive solution. But the whole world, and in particular the State that has taken the initiative and sponsored the peace process, is aware that the peace process faces a real crisis and that it has been at a standstill for over two years on the Lebanese and Syrian tracks while being eroded on the Palestinian track.

The intransigence of the current Israeli Government, its rejection of the principle of land for peace and its attempt to impose a peace based on occupation and settlement on its Arab neighbours; its Prime Minister's insistence on pursuing a policy antagonistic to peace and his rejection, under the pretext of ensuring Israel's security, of the Arabs' right to regain their occupied territories; and the fact that it possesses one of the largest and most sophisticated military arsenals in the world constitute a challenge not only to the Arab peoples but to the will of the international community as a whole.

The Director-General's statement portrayed Israel as a dove of peace that is seeking to comply with international instruments on disarmament. Here we have to ask ourselves which instruments and international treaties he is speaking of. The 1968 NPT Treaty has become near-universal, with the exception of a very small number of States. However, Israel continues to refuse to accede to it, under flimsy pretexts, and persists in its refusal to place its nuclear facilities under international supervision. We had hoped that the Director-General would speak about that in his statement, in view of the destructive capability of weapons of mass destruction and nuclear weapons in particular and of the grave consequences for humankind as a whole.

The appeal by the Director-General to some Arab States, including mine, to adhere to the Chemical Weapons Convention, which was concluded in 1993, and the failure to call on Israel to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), concluded in 1968, smacks of clear selectivity, which is neither objective nor acceptable.

All Arab States have adhered to the NPT, in response to the will of the international community. However, Israel continues to refuse to adhere to that Treaty. Those who possess nuclear weapons and have a nuclear arsenal do not care much about other weapons, including chemical weapons. Nevertheless, yesterday morning the Israeli representative declared that the decision by his Government to ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention is contingent upon adherence to it by some Arab States, totally disregarding Israel's refusal to adhere to the NPT at a time when all Arab States have adhered to it.

The statement made by the Israeli representative yesterday was full of contradictions. He portrayed Israel as a small country no more than 20 kilometres wide, surrounded by neighbours that are threatening its very existence. He continues to give us these fictitious stories and myths that no one any longer believes. The whole

world is asking how it came to be that Israel was established, why it is continuing its occupation of the Arab territories, why it has brought the peace process to a halt and why it is arming itself to the teeth with various forms of weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons, thereby disrupting the strategic balance in the region, threatening Arab national security and disregarding the Arab desire to establish a just and comprehensive peace.

Small States must seek to ensure their security and the security of others through the path of a comprehensive and just peace, not through expansion and the acquisition of nuclear capabilities to threaten their neighbours and occupy their territories.

Mr. Volski (Georgia): Allow me to join other delegations in greeting you, Mr. Chairman, and other members of the Bureau and also to extend my delegation's best wishes for every success in your responsible work.

It has not been long since we established the tradition of emphasizing an event of global scale and significance: the ending of the cold war and the global stand-off, when international tension no longer threatened coming generations with Armageddon and extermination.

In recent years we have seen significant progress in the field of disarmament in terms of reaching international agreements and taking practical measures. Important efforts have been undertaken with respect to enlarging the geographical area of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

We believe that, despite the sometimes radically different approaches of States to certain issues, we should find a common position, since we have to face a common objective: to eliminate the threat to international peace and stability — more broadly, to avert the threat of the extermination of mankind.

Georgia has considerable economic resources for the development of its statehood and for the well-being of its population. Georgia's geo-strategic situation attracts various kinds of interest from within and without.

Together with its intellectual potential and resources, Georgia's future prosperity is in many ways linked with the implementation of global economic projects that will build a bridge between Asia and Europe by providing highways of transportation and energy resources. Today, the well-known Transport Corridor: Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA) project and that of the historic Silk Road are no longer just concepts but working mechanisms. It is understandable that regional and global stability is of the utmost importance for Georgia.

The organic link between disarmament and, respectively, the easing of tension and development has already become tangible for us. Unfortunately, under present circumstances we face the problem of aggressive separatism, which has created a significant source of tension in the region of Abkhazia in western Georgia.

The separatist regime which has succeeded in gaining temporary control over that area has no future; but it should be viewed as proof of the urgency of the matter raised in this Committee by the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, as we are facing an attempt to cause the violent disintegration of a State.

The problem of anti-personnel landmines is extremely important from both a moral and a practical standpoint. Georgia's accession to the landmines Convention is a most urgent matter and is planned for the imminent future. But the complexity of the situation is also understandable: it is impossible to fully meet the provisions of the Convention at a time when, due to separatist or other ambitions, part of the territory of the country is practically uncontrolled.

Neither can we speak about the comprehensive transparency of armaments under those circumstances. There is no practical mechanism that could control the influx of conventional arms in those territories or monitor illegal trafficking and reveal information about the existing stockpiles of armaments.

When compounded by lawlessness, the problem of trafficking radioactive, chemical and biological materials becomes all the more urgent and worrisome. When speaking about the tensions existing in the Caucasus region, we have the following picture: on one side of the scale there is the close cooperation of States with a view to implementing global economic projects and ensuring sustainable development, and on the other side there are adventurous ambitions linked with the interests of certain political revanchist or criminal groups.

We believe that those problems give us an opportunity to pinpoint concrete items for the agenda of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Georgia welcomes and supports joint efforts aimed at lasting peace through taking practical measures in the field of disarmament. We hope that the meetings of the relevant working group will assume an intensive character. We

believe that during the meetings of the group we will have the opportunity to discuss the creation of effective measures for resolving the problem of landmines, which is connected with means of assistance on the part of organizations and countries involved in the settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia.

We will also have the opportunity to discuss the improvement of transparency in information about disarmament under conditions of ethnic political conflicts.

Georgia, like other nations of goodwill, is gravely concerned at the threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Our position is unequivocal with regard to the recently conducted nuclear tests. This question has been widely discussed. We hope that the number of the signatories of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will be increased by two in the near future.

And yet, we cannot but stress that the efforts aimed at curbing the proliferation of nuclear weapons do not live up to present demands. We believe that more attention should be paid to the analysis of the preconditions for the propensity to develop nuclear armaments.

More efforts should be made to eliminate such preconditions. It is important to note that in the view of certain States their security is guaranteed not by the reinforcement of their destructive power, but by cooperation. Those States that are capable of this should emerge as active catalysts for bilateral and multilateral negotiations.

We attach great importance to the creation of security mechanisms for non-nuclear-weapon States. It is unfortunate that consensus on this matter has not been reached. We hope that the Ad Hoc Committee set up by the Conference on Disarmament will actively work to overcome existing obstacles.

It is also very urgent that in the elaboration and implementation of agreements on disarmament environmental problems be dealt with. We deeply hope that the ideals of preserving the environment for posterity will ultimately prevail and that the parties will do their best to present the world with a resolution adopted by acclamation.

Georgia, like many other nations, welcomes the re-establishment of the Department for Disarmament Affairs and believes that it was an important step for strengthening the Organization in the field of disarmament. We view this structure as a main think-tank for the analysis of problems in various parts of the world. It should be given the capacity to mobilize United Nations resources and effectively direct them towards the task of peace and development.

The initiatives of the Secretary-General with a view to updating, revitalizing and streamlining the work of the First Committee and of the Disarmament Commission require support and our backing.

Mr. Zackheos (Cyprus): I would like at the outset to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau on your well-deserved election. I have no doubt that with your long experience and wise guidance the goals of our Committee will be fully achieved. I wish to assure you of the Cyprus delegation's full support for your important task.

The last decade witnessed the demise of the cold-war era and the complete rewriting of the disarmament and arms-control agenda. During this period we have seen such major achievements as the signing of the Chemical Weapons Convention and its entry into force in April last year; the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which is the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime; the strengthening of the process for reviewing the NPT; the conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; and the signing of the Convention aimed at the total, worldwide elimination of anti-personnel landmines.

Cyprus supports all efforts aimed at the strengthening of the international non-proliferation regime through universal adherence to the existing legally binding international instruments and the development of effective verification mechanisms; through unilateral actions taken by nuclear-weapon States to reduce their nuclear arsenals; through the surveillance and, by use of the appropriate export-control mechanisms, the control of exports of sensitive materials, equipment and technologies; through regional arrangements freely entered into by the States concerned; as well as through other interim measures, such as the introduction of moratoriums and the signing of confidence-building agreements.

We also join all previous speakers who have addressed the need to promote the implementation of the objectives set down in the Non-Proliferation Treaty and to secure that Treaty's universality. Cyprus is firmly committed to the successful outcome of the year 2000 NPT Review

Conference and fully shares the objectives of the European Union towards this end.

We would also like to add our voice to that of those members that have underlined the significance of the fact that 150 countries have signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and have urged its early entry into force. In this respect, we welcome the expressed intention of India and Pakistan to sign the agreement.

We welcome the recent decision of the Conference on Disarmament to establish an Ad Hoc Committee to start negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty and a second Ad Hoc Committee to consider further steps to ensure non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT against the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons.

Another important development was the entry into force last April of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Cyprus became party to the Chemical Weapons Convention in August after adopting all the necessary internal legislation and after setting up the required machinery for its implementation. Also, Cyprus has officially applied to join the Australia Group and the Nuclear Suppliers Group. Equally important is the adoption of a legally binding protocol establishing a strengthened verification and compliance regime for the Convention on Bacteriological and Toxin Weapons at the earliest possible date.

We recognize that much more needs to be done in the field of conventional weapons; however, we are much encouraged by the overwhelming response of the international community regarding the total elimination of anti-personnel landmines. I wish to reiterate in this respect that, despite the continuing foreign occupation of almost 40 per cent of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus, we decided to sign the relevant Convention as an expression of our determination to join the international community in its efforts to eliminate this totally inhumane method of warfare. In this respect, I would like to note also our efforts and agreement regarding the demining of the ceasefire line in Cyprus, as well as the assistance offered by the Government of Canada.

We are also encouraged by the attention given to the prevention and the combating of illicit arms-trafficking. Cyprus has aligned itself with all measures being pursued by the European Union and others to halt the illicit and covert trafficking of small arms through tighter controls and closer cooperation and coordination.

We fully share the view expressed by many preceding speakers Committee that arms control and disarmament are an essential component of international peace and security. Although the reduction of forces and armaments alone cannot provide for or guarantee international security, it can reduce the risk of an outbreak of a military conflict, and it can contribute to confidence-building and conflict resolution.

In this context, I would like to recall once more the proposal made by the President of the Republic of Cyprus for the demilitarization of the Republic of Cyprus, a proposal that we consider a genuine offer for peace on the island and in the region at large. During his address to the plenary of this year's session of the General Assembly, President Clerides suggested, in response to Security Council resolutions, concrete ways and means to begin work on a specific programme to reduce foreign and local forces and equipment, as a necessary preparatory step for the final withdrawal of all foreign forces and elements from the island and its demilitarization, as stipulated in the relevant United Nations resolutions.

The demilitarization proposal included the gradual disbanding of the National Guard of Cyprus, the handing over of all arms and military equipment to an international force and the deposit of all monies saved in United Nations accounts in exchange for the phased, complete withdrawal of all foreign troops and the Turkish Cypriot armed forces, as demanded by the relevant United Nations resolutions.

As the President of Cyprus stated, these proposals and suggestions are still valid and timely, and as such they remain on the negotiating table, for we remain committed to seeking a solution to the Cyprus problem by peaceful means. We will continue to exert every effort towards that end.

I should like finally to bring to the attention of the Committee a matter of great concern to the Government and the people of Cyprus. It regards the decision of the Turkish Government to build a nuclear power plant in a highly seismic area in southeastern Turkey, which, apart from the obvious environmental consequences, poses, we believe, a potential risk to international peace and security. According to reports by several international non-governmental organizations, including Greenpeace, the proposed site of Turkey's first nuclear power plant, Akkuyu Bay, situated next to the Ecemis fault line, a highly seismic area, greatly increases the risk of a catastrophic accident that could spread radioactive contamination over Turkey, Cyprus and the Middle East. Such an accident

would cause enormous economic and environmental damage and social dislocation, and would have a grave impact on the health of surrounding populations. As the relevant report prepared by Greenpeace states, at a time when no new reactors are being ordered in Western Europe and North America, and while the nuclear industry has advanced to such a level as to claim that such accidents are unlikely, major accidents have happened at nuclear power stations, and they continue to happen.

Since the Republic of Cyprus became a Member of the United Nations in 1960, we have been fully committed to the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter, an integral part of which is the maintenance of international peace and security. We have consistently maintained that genuine and lasting peace can be achieved only through the implementation of an effective international security system as provided for in the Charter. During the last decade the international community has made great strides towards the realization of that lofty goal. We have a duty to future generations to approach the new millennium with the same resolve and determination.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): The First Committee has thus concluded its general debate.

I call now on representatives who wish to make statements in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Kim Sam Jong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Yesterday the representative of South Korea made comparatively long remarks concerning the Korean peninsula, on disarmament, security and reunification. He spoke as though they were interested in solving the problems of peace and security, disarmament and reunification on the Korean peninsula. That is utterly deceptive and ridiculous, simply because their loud talk about peace, security and disarmament belies their true intention: to achieve the confrontational goal they set forth during the cold-war era.

The path forward is clear. In order to end the politically confrontational relations on the Korean peninsula, the North and the South should move forward towards confederational reunification based on North-South mutual coexistence and the implementation by neighbouring countries of impartial policies without instigating North-South confrontation. But South Korea's action is negative. They oppose reunification on the basis of North-South coexistence and try to cover up their real attempts to reunify on the basis of their own system. Moreover, they travel to the United States and to Japan begging for collaboration and cooperation with the South only, aimed at restraining the North. Their true intention is obviously to win a confrontation with the North. Accordingly, their crying about reunification, coexistence and sunshine policies is not even worth consideration.

On military aspects, two questions should be resolved: the destruction of the confrontational structure on the one hand, and resolving disarmament and regional security matters on the other. To dismantle the confrontational structure, a peace agreement between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States should be concluded, since there has already been a North-South non-aggression agreement. Simultaneously, the other disarmament and regional security matters must be resolved. Moreover, the South Koreans are ignoring the very reality with which the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States are confronted militarily, and they oppose the conclusion of a peace agreement between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, while participating with the United States and Japan in the three-way military alliance against the North. But while turning away from these fundamental matters, they claim that disarmament and regional security matters should be resolved first.

In these facts we can see clearly their true intentions. What they want is to disarm the North step by step, through the so-called resolution of disarmament and regional security matters, in order to achieve their ultimate goal of confrontation. Although they talk about four-way talks, how can we expect good progress in such talks so long as they maintain wrong intentions in their hearts?

All these facts show that the South Koreans do not wish to dismantle the confrontational structure through mutual compromise, but wish rather to achieve the ultimate goal of the cold-war era with political and military support from outside. The international community should recognize the realities of the Korean peninsula, where the South Koreans are not discarding the confrontational aim of the cold-war era — that is, reunification on the basis of their own system. The main purpose of their crying about disarmament, reduction of tension, reconciliation and cooperation is nothing other than to disarm the North and to achieve their confrontational goal.

Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan): I would like to speak in exercise of my right of reply in order not to allow this body to be misled by allegations made yesterday by the representative of Armenia. Azerbaijan was forcibly drawn into a full-scale war with Armenia, in which a wide range

of weapons has been used. A substantial part of the military arsenal employed consists of weapons and military technology limited by the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe — the CFE Treaty. At present, Armenia controls 20 per cent of the territory of my country. At the beginning of 1997 Armenia had 253 battle tanks, 278 armoured vehicles and 298 artillery units stationed in the occupied territory. Clearly, Armenia's treaty-limited equipment stationed in part of Azerbaijan's territory already exceeds the maximum levels for holdings set for the whole of Azerbaijan.

Under the fourth preambular paragraph of CFE Treaty, the States parties have an obligation

> "to refrain in their mutual relations, as well as in their international relations in general, from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations".

The Treaty has been violated by one State party — Armenia — which has used force against the territorial integrity of another State party to the Treaty — Azerbaijan. Given this violation, Azerbaijan could, with perfectly legal justification, consider itself to be released from its Treaty obligations. Despite our difficulties, however, Azerbaijan is continuing to fulfil those obligations. No other State party to the Treaty has implemented it in conditions of war and with a fifth of its territory occupied by the armed forces of an adversary. Even at the height of the military confrontation, we have never refused to accept inspections by other States.

Azerbaijan fully supports the idea of the Ottawa Convention. A total ban on anti-personnel landmines has both security and humanitarian dimensions. It goes without saying that the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines causes human suffering and casualties and also, to a certain extent, adversely affects economic development and reconstruction. Therefore Azerbaijan strongly supports the goal of ending the human tragedy they cause.

I am pleased to inform the Committee that a national demining agency was established recently. However, the present security situation in our region in the absence of pertinent alternatives continues to preclude my country's joining in a total ban on anti-personnel landmines at the current stage. As is known, the Ottawa Convention strictly prohibits the use of anti-personnel landmines and demands their destruction, and it does not provide for any reservations or exceptions. A State party to the Convention that has undergone external offence and needs to exercise its right of self-defence, protecting its territory with the use of, *inter alia*, anti-personnel landmines, becomes the violator.

The Republic of Armenia continues its aggression against my country, occupying 20 per cent of Azerbaijan's territory and making wide use of anti-personnel landmines and anti-tank mines there. Moreover, the threat of the resumption of hostilities still exists. The illegal acquisition by Armenia of $1 billion of offensive weaponry disproportionate to its needs and regular military exercises with another country, designed to increase the offensive potential of the Armenian armed forces, is dangerous proof of that.

In a wider context, such Armenian political and military conduct not only prevents the settlement of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan but also has a direct destabilizing impact on the whole situation in the region. Therefore, unlike Armenia, whose territory was never invaded or occupied, Azerbaijan is forced to apply appropriate measures, including the use of mines, as a deterrent.

Ms. Aghadjanian (Armenia): I should like to refer to the statement just made by my Azerbaijani colleague in exercise of the right of reply.

The allegations regarding a so-called war between Armenia and Azerbaijan or Armenia's armed aggression against Azerbaijan are totally misleading. The conflict in question is one between the people of Nagorny-Karabakh and the Government of Azerbaijan, which refuses to address the demands of the people of Nagorny-Karabakh to exercise their right to self-determination.

The fighting in Nagorny-Karabakh is not the result of armed aggression but self-defence on the part of the local Armenian population, their only means of avoiding mass deportation and genocide. Hence Armenia and its armed forces can bear no responsibility for the territories that are currently controlled by the armed forces of Nagorny-Karabakh and whatever military equipment may be stationed there, and it would be desirable if in his future statements my colleague would use more precise names and references.

On the point of violations of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the conventional arsenal of

the Soviet Union was divided among the States parties members of the Commonwealth of Independent States. The division of the former Soviet Union's arms was conducted on the basis of two legally binding documents, to which both Armenia and Azerbaijan are parties. The CFE Treaty and the Tashkent Agreement on the principles and procedures of CFE implementation stipulate that those States should have an equal amount of military equipment in all five categories as defined by the Treaty. Armenia has been in compliance with its CFE Treaty obligations and does not exceed the aforementioned limitations in all five categories.

Inspections of Armenia's armed forces provided for by Treaty protocols have not revealed any violations of quantitative limitations. The 1997 arms control and disarmament agency report also states that Armenia complies with its limitations. On the contrary, as is revealed by the annual exchange of data under the CFE Treaty, Azerbaijan continues to violate CFE provisions by seriously exceeding the limitations in three Treaty-limited equipment categories. Azerbaijan's disregard of the CFE Treaty provisions threatens the brittle peace in the region. Moreover, Azerbaijan's possession of a large arsenal of conventional weapons casts doubt on its intentions to settle the Nagorny-Karabakh conflict by peaceful means.

Armenia welcomes the fortieth ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. However, to assume legally binding obligations we expect clearly observed readiness and reciprocity from our neighbours in the region. We are concerned at Azerbaijan's reluctance to accede to the ban. The existence of a large number of landmines along our borders with Azerbaijan is a great source of concern, and that must be addressed. Armenia's full participation in the Convention is contingent upon a similar level of political commitment by other States in the region to assume their obligations under the Convention.

With regard to the issue of the so-called arms transfers, I should like to state that a Trilateral Inter-Governmental Commission consisting of Russian, Azerbaijani and Armenian representatives has been established to deal with conventional arms transfers to Armenia and Azerbaijan. The Commission, established at the initiative of Azerbaijan, is still considering the issue of arms transfers and has not arrived at any conclusions. Ostensibly, Azerbaijan claims to be interested in the settlement of the issue. However, Azerbaijan's repeated raising of the issue in other forums before the Commission comes to any conclusion can be construed as an attempt to distract the international community's attention from its flagrant violations of the CFE Treaty.

This is not the first time that a representative of Azerbaijan, at different levels, has used the so-called Armenian aggression or occupation to justify whatever economic, social, political or other problems they might have. Today's statement in the exercise of the right of reply is just another example of this notorious practice.

Mr. Sobel (Israel): I should like to speak in exercise of the right of reply in responding to the statement by the Syrian delegation.

The representative of Syria seemed to dismiss lightly the threat to Israel which we pointed out, and he made fun of Israel's small size, but frankly Syria's record on the peace process and arms control does not give us a great deal of encouragement.

Looking at some of the Syrian record, I see that Syria opposed the Camp David process; Syria then proceeded to oppose the Peace Treaty with Egypt; Syria then continued to oppose the Treaty of Peace with Jordan; Syria then opposed the Oslo peace talks with the PLO; it then continued to oppose the talks with the Palestinians. It continues today to object to and oppose the present, ongoing Wye Plantation talks. None of that points to a very encouraging Syrian attitude to the peace process in the Middle East. Furthermore, Syria has supported international terrorism. And we all recall the involvement of the Syrian Embassy in London in planting a bomb on an El Al civilian aeroplane.

Syria continues to occupy parts of Lebanon. Syria is one of the few States in the world which has poison gas in its standing military arsenal — again, not a very encouraging prospect for us in Israel. Furthermore, they have equipped ballistic missiles with poison-gas warheads that are stationed today in Syria and directed against Israel. Frankly, it does not give us a very warm feeling or encourage us.

Given that record, I find that the Syrian diatribe has a fairly hollow sound to it. The solution — the crux — remains that States, including Syria, must make peace with Israel, have normal relations and discuss and negotiate arms control directly with us. But it cannot work both ways. They cannot refuse to recognize Israel and call for its destruction yet at the same time call upon Israel to take unilateral steps. The key is direct negotiations: make peace

with us and live in peace with us, and then negotiate issues, including arms control.

Mr. Esenli (Turkey): The Turkish delegation has always made a conscious effort to spare this Committee regional problems so that the lofty goals of the disarmament agenda can be best addressed. However, my delegation is compelled to take the floor to speak against the allegations made by one of the previous speakers on the Cyprus issue.

It is very ironic to hear calls for demilitarization and the reduction of tension on the island and in the region at a time — to be more precise, on a day — when the Greek Cypriot National Guard units, together with an armada of army, navy and air force units belonging to Greece, are staging provocative military manoeuvres in and around southern Cyprus. It is reported that F-16 and A-7 warplanes from Greece will be deployed at a military airbase in southern Cyprus. In the context of the joint military doctrine between Greece and the Greek Cypriot Administration, this continuing provocation and the planned deployment of the sophisticated S-300 missiles in southern Cyprus constitute the underlying causes of tension in Cyprus.

In the context of those policies of enmity, the representative who spoke earlier also tried to exploit the question of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Turkey, which adheres to all the international instruments in the field of nuclear non-proliferation, does not need to be reminded of its responsibilities.

I do not want to go into details. The unfounded claims made here today will be duly replied to by the representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, and that reply will distributed as a document of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

Mr. Cho (Republic of Korea): I wish to respond to the comment made by our colleague from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in his exercise of the right of reply. Frankly, we are a little bit disappointed, because we did not hear any new element from him, simply the repetition of what the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had already mentioned during the general debate. I do not think that my delegation should repeat the details of our position; I do not think that that would be in the interests of this Committee. We believe that we have had ample opportunity to explain our position, and we believe that that position has been well understood by the members of this Committee.

But let me just add one important point: the task of achieving peace on the Korean peninsula is not an easy one. As we know, we need patience and tolerance. Indeed, reconciliation and the restoration of mutual trust between the two parties would bring both of us nearer to the eventual goal of peace and the unification of the Korean peninsula.

In that regard, I wish to underline again that our "Sunshine Policy" is intended not to perpetuate confrontation, but to put an end to the confrontation of the old era, to open a new era of genuine peace and cooperation on the Korean peninsula.

Mr. Abou-Hadid (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I do not wish to prolong this meeting, but the representative of Israel chose to refer to Syria's record. I would like to recall that in his statement yesterday he said,

(*spoke in English*)

> "Israel's record is impressive, and we intend to continue to play our part in the arms control effort of the family of nations." (*A/C.1/53/PV.10*)

(*spoke in Arabic*)

Indeed, Israel has an impressive record of defying international law, defying the United Nations and even defying international humanitarian law.

The meeting of the States parties to the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War — to be held in Geneva next month in response to the almost unanimous proposal of the General Assembly — provides but one example of that impressive record. I regret to have to remind representatives that yesterday the representative of Israel did not answer the direct questions posed to him in response to his statement regarding the concerns of some States in the region in connection with the Chemical Weapons Convention. We wonder what Israel's justifications are.

Secondly, he did not say anything about the attempt to assassinate Khaled Meshal with chemical agents by Mossad members using counterfeit Canadian passports. Nor did he offer Israel's explanation of the 1992 crash in the Netherlands of an El Al airliner carrying chemical agents. He did not say anything about the disappearance of 30 tons of these agents.

I believe that representatives have read what was published recently in *Jeune Afrique* magazine, in Paris, regarding Israel's manufacture of biological and chemical weapons. That article stated that diplomats and experts in the field of armaments have revealed the existence of a large factory in Israel devoted to the manufacture of chemical and biological weapons. The factory was established in 1952 near Tel Aviv. The magazine quoted those diplomats and experts as saying that the Israeli factory — the facilities of which take up a number of hectares and are strictly guarded — operates under the name "Biological Research Institute". It is located in a suburb of Tel Aviv, but is not included in any aerial map of the region.

The magazine went on to say that the El Al airliner that crashed near Amsterdam in 1992 was carrying 190 litres of chemical agent to that Israeli factory, an extremely poisonous gas similar to that which was used by the Aum Shinrikyo sect in Japan in the terrorist acts committed in the Tokyo subway in 1995. The Israeli authorities have finally acknowledged the El Al incident and have said that the plane was carrying chemical agents that can become poisonous if other materials are added to them. But the magazine went on to say that this Israeli version is inaccurate, because a study shows that 700 people of the neighbourhood in which the plane crashed continue to suffer from many illnesses as a result of the leakage of chemical agents from the plane.

The article pointed out that Israel continues to deny the existence of its chemical weapons programme, but that Israel has prepared F-16 planes to transport the chemical agents made in its factory and that the El Al plane was carrying chemical agents from an American company to that factory.

The Israeli representative is well aware that the peace process could not have started without Syria's help. Syria responded to the initiative of the sponsors, the United States and Russia, on the grounds that this process must be based on the resolutions of international legality, Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and, as far as Lebanon is concerned, resolution 425 (1978).

The halt in the peace process is due to the position of the current Israeli Prime Minister, his refusal to accept the principle of land for peace, his rejection of withdrawal and his refusal to resume the negotiations from the point where they were suspended, on all tracks. What is taking place now at the Wye Plantation proves to all that the current Prime Minister is far removed from any faith in the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace. On the contrary, he is trying to kill the process, as he promised his voters he would do in his election campaign.

Let us set the record straight by not accepting lies and obfuscations from Israel.

Mr. Zackheos (Cyprus): The Turkish representative seems to be allergic to the name of the Republic of Cyprus and the legitimate and internationally recognized Government of Cyprus. He prefers to refer to a secessionist entity which is the result of Turkey's invasion and occupation of Cyprus, which was declared illegal by the Security Council and has been recognized only by Turkey.

The Turkish representative does not explain why he does not support the proposal of the President of Cyprus for the demilitarization of the island, which would bring peace and stability to Cyprus and the region and offer full security to the Turkish Cypriots. It is apparent that Turkey does not wish to discuss this issue because of its expansionist aims and because it wants to keep Cyprus perpetually hostage to its military superiority.

The Turkish representative also referred to the decision of the Cyprus Government to enhance its defensive capability and to the National Guard's yearly exercises. I would like to remind everyone that the enhancement of the defensive capabilities of the National Guard is an expression of the right to self-defence recognized in the Charter of the United Nations. This is especially true in the case of Cyprus, where the long-standing illegal occupation of the northern part of the Republic of Cyprus by approximately 36,000 Turkish troops makes this even more relevant. I would like to point out that the tension on the island is caused only by the strong and threatening presence of the Turkish occupying forces, which are in an attack formation and which have the capability to get early reinforcements from Turkey.

Our experience with the Turkish bombardments against innocent civilians in 1964 and 1974 fully justifies our concern for the security of our people. It is clear and undeniable that the Turkish threat and actions, both in 1964 and in 1974, were in violation of the United Nations Charter, in particular of Article 2, paragraph 4.

Turkey is always ready to threaten to take military measures against Cyprus or, for that matter, against others of its neighbours.

We have not, however, seen even the slightest effort on its part to reduce tension or to support a return to the negotiating table in order to find a lasting solution, based on principle, to the Cyprus problem. The Government of Cyprus, for its part, has given ample proof of its desire to find a peaceful solution to the Cyprus problem that would provide security and prosperity to both communities on the island. I call upon Turkey to come to the negotiating table and discuss questions of the reduction of tension on the island; I assure them that they will find eager partners on our part.

On the question of Greek participation in the exercises in Cyprus, I note that this is done at the request of and with the approval of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus.

Mr. Sobel (Israel): I listened attentively to the reply by the representative of Syria. I failed, however, to hear his reaction to the point that I made. The point that I made was that Syria has poison gas in its military arsenal; that it has equipped ballistic missiles with poison-gas warheads; that Israel is within the range of those missiles; that those missiles are aimed at Israel; and that Israel, frankly, has something to fear.

Mr. Kim Sam Jong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Over the past two weeks, when my delegation and the delegation of South Korea have expressed different positions, I came to the conclusion that talking with the South Koreans is useless because they are controlled by outside forces, even in policy-making areas. For instance, the withdrawal of United States troops is a fundamental matter; in this respect they have no power. The root cause of the confrontation is the intervention of outside forces. If there had been no outside intervention, there would not have been a division between the North and the South, and Korea would have been reunified.

South Korea has neglected the many root causes of the conflict and has begged for the permanent stationing of United States troops in South Korea. South Korea should pursue an independent policy and ask for the withdrawal of the United States troops. Withdrawal of the United States troops from South Korea would lead to the establishment of favourable conditions for peace, disarmament and reunification.

Therefore, I would prefer to talk with the real bosses from now on.

Mr. Abou-Hadid (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): People who live in glass houses should not throw stones. Since, as we know, Israel possesses 200 nuclear weapons, since it possesses nuclear reactors not subject to international inspection, since it possesses chemical and biological laboratories and factories, since it continues to occupy the territories of others and since it is determined to perpetuate that occupation, I do not believe it is entitled to question other States. Under the Charter, States have a legitimate right to self-defence.

Our region does not need strategic alliances; rather it needs a just and comprehensive peace based on legally binding international resolutions. This means complete Israeli withdrawal from the forcibly occupied Syrian Golan to the lines of 4 June 1967 and from southern Lebanon and the western Bekaa in conformity with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the principle of land for peace. With regard to negotiations on the Palestinian track, we support the realization of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, including its rights of self-determination and to the establishment of an independent State of its own on its national soil.

As members know, the peace process is facing a real crisis; it has come to a complete halt on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks because of the election of the current Israeli Prime Minister. But Syria remains committed to peace as a strategic choice; this requires the resumption of negotiations. We have consistently affirmed our readiness to resume those negotiations from the point at which they left off on both the Syrian and the Lebanese tracks, and to continue to build on previous commitments and undertakings with a view to establishing a just and comprehensive peace in our region.

We have yet to hear from the representative of Israel any convincing answer to these arguments, which are in keeping with international legality.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Before calling on the representative of the Republic of Korea, I call on the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on a point of order.

Mr. Kim Sam Jong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Yesterday, the South Korean representative exercised his right of reply in relation to our main speech last Friday. Today he spoke a second time in exercise of his right of reply, and it is my belief that in accordance with the Committee's procedures the South Korean representative should not be given another opportunity to speak in exercise of the right of reply. If it is given to him,

then we too have the legitimate right to exercise the right of reply.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I remind the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that each delegation has the right to speak in exercise of the right of reply twice per meeting. The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has already spoken twice this morning in exercise of the right of reply, and the representative of the Republic of Korea has spoken once. After the latter representative has made his second statement in exercise of the right of reply, neither he nor the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will have another opportunity to speak in exercise of the right of reply at this meeting.

Mr. Cho (Republic of Korea): Mr. Chairman, we fully support the ruling you have just made on procedural issues. That has been the understanding of my delegation and is written in the rules of procedure.

We listened very carefully to what our colleague from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea said in his last statement. It was not surprising, but very disappointing. If I go into detail on the issue of United States troops in Korea, I think it might be inevitable that we would spend several hours arguing with the North Koreans. It is well known that this is for defence purpose and is in accordance with a mutual defence treaty between sovereign States similar to those we see everywhere else throughout the world where countries are faced with a threat from foreign forces.

I do not want to go into detail as to the nature of the threat we in the Republic of Korea are facing from the north, because this would not be helpful to a constructive discussion in this meeting. They have a huge military buildup and a full deployment of artillery whose range includes the capital of the Republic of Korea, less than 30 miles away. There has been infiltration by submarines, and the list goes on. I will not go into detail but will just leave it to the members of the Committee.

I am saying this not to confront the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea but to help achieve reconciliation. So through you, Mr. Chairman, I wish to appeal to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to understand our genuine intentions. We wish to find a peaceful solution to these issues, which are of the utmost interest to us. I would hope that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea one day could respond positively to this approach.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I now call on those representatives who wish to speak a second time in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Esenli (Turkey): For the record, I should like to reiterate that the unfounded allegations made by the previous speaker, the Greek Cypriot representative, using the usurped seat of the Republic of Cyprus, will be duly replied to by their interlocutor, the representative of the Turkish Republic of Cyprus.

Mr. Zackheos (Cyprus): The delegation of Turkey continues to refer to the illegal entity in the north and does not accept the legality of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus. Throughout history no invader has ever accepted the legality of its victim, so I see no reason why Turkey should have a different attitude.

His right of reply gives me the opportunity to say that our objection to the nuclear power plant in southern Turkey stems from the fact that this area lies in a very seismic region, and we have serious environmental concerns besides the security considerations. I will make available to all delegations the relevant report from Greenpeace in order to show that our allegations are based on fact.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I wish to say to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that twice I read him the rules of procedure governing rights of reply. I do not intend to stray from the rules of procedure and am therefore unable to give him the floor a third time.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.